

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 H-01 MCT-01 SS-15 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 692

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 2674

FOR INR/RNA

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP PLO TS

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION

ABROAD: TUNISIA

REF: STATE 091578

1. FOLLOWING IS COMPILATION OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE
WITHIN EMBASSY ON PLO REPRESENTATION IN TUNISIA.

A. PLO IS REPRESENTED IN TUNISIA.

B. PLO OFFICES ARE LOCATED 68 RUE NAHAS PACHA, TUNIS.
ESTABLISHED ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO. CHIEF IS HAKIM BALAWI.
VARIOUS PALESTINIANS WORK UNDER BALAWI, BUT NO CURRENT
INFORMATION AVAILABLE AS TO SIZE OF MISSION AND ITS
COMPONENTS. INFORMATION OFFICE OPERATES OUT OF SAME
LOCATION. PLO REPRESENTATIVES ARE NEITHER FULLY NOR
PARTIALLY ACCREDITED AS DIPLOMATIC MISSION.
BALAWI IS IN FREQUENT CONTACT WITH TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT
AND PARTY OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE REPORTEDLY ENJOYS GOOD
RELATIONSHIP. BALAWI FREQUENTS VARIOUS ARAB EMBASSIES,
BUT HE IS NOT ACTIVE IN OTHER DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES. HE IS
NOT KNOWN PERSONALLY BY ANY EMBASSY OFFICERS. ACCORDING
TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WHO DO SEE HIM OCCASIONALLY,
BALAWI (IN MID-FORTIES) IS INTELLIGENT AND URBANE. HE
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TPSQFB REPUTATION OF BEING A "MODERATE" IN TERMS OF
PALESTINIAN POLITICS AND EVIDENTLY IS CLOSE TO ARAFAT.

C. THE PLO IS THE ONLY PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION AUTHORIZED
BUT GOT TO OPERATE IN TUNISIA AND WE ARE UNAWARE OF EXIS-
TENCE OF ANY CLANDESTINE GROUPS.

D. ALTHOUGH PLO REPRESENTATIVES DO NOT HAVE FORMAL

DIPLOMATIC STATUS, THEY REPORTEDLY ENJOY MOST OF PRIVILEGES
GENERALLY ACCORDED FOREIGN DIPLOMATS IN TUNISIA. FUNDS
ARE SOLICITED FROM PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS. IN PAST,
DESTOUIAN SOCILIST PARTY (PSD) REPORTEDLY PROVIDED
LIMITED INDIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING OFFICE
SPACE, ONE OR TWO AUTOMOBILES AND SALARIES OF SEVERAL
TUNISIAN EMPLOYEES. ACCESS TO PSD FACILITIES ALSO MADE
AVAILABLE FROM TIME TO TIME. BALAWI LIVES IN LARGE
SEASIDE VILLA (DAR MONGI SLIM) OWNED BY TUNISIAN GOVERN-
MENT IN GAMMARTH SUBURB, AND PRESUMABLY PLO ENJOYS OTHER
INDIRECT PSD OR GOT SUBSIDIES TO COVER LOCAL EXPENSES.
WE ARE NOT AWARE GOT MAKES ANY SIGNIFICANT
CONTRIBUTION TO PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT OUTSIDE OF TUNISIA,
ALTHOUGH PLO OFFICIALS ARE OCCASIONALLY ISSUED TUNISIAN
PASSPORTS.

2. ABOVE INFORMATION IS FAR FROM COMPLETE BUT WE ARE
SUBMITTING IT SEVERTHELESS IN VIEW OF APRIL 14 DEADLINE.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PLO REPRESENTATIVES AND
ACTIVISTS IN TUNISIA WILL BE SUBMITTED AS IT BECOMES
AVAILABLE. MULCAHY

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